

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NEW DE 11982 161421Z

43

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7732

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMBAD

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 11982

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR IN

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER ATTACKS FOREIGN CRITICS

REF: NEW DELHI 9456 (NOTAL)

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. MAKING THE TRADITIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY SPEECH FROM THE
RAMPARTS OF THE RED FORT IN NEW DELHI AUGUST 15, PRIME
MINISTER GANDHI EXTENSIVELY LAMBASTED HER FOREIGN CIRITCS:
"I WANT TO SAY ONLY ONE THING TO THOSE WHO CRITICIZE US-- THE
MORE THEY CRITICIZE US AND ATTEMPT TO WEAKEN US, THE GREATER
WILL BE OUR STRENGTH AND WE WILL FOLLOW OUR DHOSEN PATH MORE
RAPIDLY." SUCH COUNTRIES, SHE SAID, HAD NO RIGHT TO CRITICIZE,
AS THEY HAD BLATANTLY SUPPORTED REACTIONARY AND MILITARISTIC
REGIMES THEY DID NOT RAISE THEIR VOICE WHEN HUNDREDS OF
THOUSANDS WERE KILLED. ACCUSING HER CRITICS OF
INCONSISTENCY, MRS. GANHI SAID: "THOSE PEOPLE DID NOT
SIDE WITH INDIA WHEN THERE WERE NO RESTICTIONS, NOBODY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 11982 161421Z

HAD BEEN ARRESTED, THERE WAS NO CENSORSHIP". THOSE

COUNTRIES, SHE SAID, FAVORED REGIMES WHICH "GAGGED" PEOPLE. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE MAHATMA GANDI AND PANDIT NEHRU WERE ALSO VICTIMS OF THEIR CHARACTER ASSASSINATION.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER CLAIMED TO BE UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND HOW INDIA'S PNE THREATENED WOULD PEACE WHEN OTHERS WERE STOCKPILING NUCLEAR EQUIPMENT AND SPENDING MILLIONS ON ARMS, WHEN THEY WERE NOT FACED WITH ANY THREAT. EVEN INDIA'S EFFORTS TO IMPORVE ITS ECONOMY, THE PRIME MINISTER ASSERTED, WERE CRITICIZED. THEY SAID THAT INDIA COULD NOT AFFORD STEEL PLANTS, BUT NOW STEEL WAS A VITAL INGREDIENT IN INDIA'S ECONOMIC SUCCESS. ON FOREIGN AID, MRS. GANDHI SAID THAT INDIA, LIKE OTHER COUNTRIES, ACCEPTED IT BUT OONLY WITHOUT STRINGS:" .. WE DID NOT PERMIT THE AID-GIVING COUNTRY TO INFRINGE OXN OUR SOVEREIGNTY." THE PRIME MININSTER REFERRED TO THE ARMED INVASIONS WHICH INDIA HAD HAD TO FACE AND DECLARED: "BUT MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE ARMED INVASIONS ARE THE SECRET INFASIONS WHICH CANNOT BE SEEN."

3. MRS. GANDHI ALSO DISCUSSED THE GAINS OF THE EMERGENCY AT LENGTH AND STRSSED "PURAN SWARAJ" OR COMPLEE FREEDOM." SHE EXPLAINED THIS AS ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR THE MASSES IN CONTRAST TO THE PROTECTION OF THE INTERESTS OF THE FEW. SHE ALSO TOUCHED UPON THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF ITS UNITY. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. COMMENT: MRS. GANDHI'S REMARKS ARE SUBSTANTIALLY AN ECHO OF HER PRESS INTERVIEWS OF JUNE 25, MARKING THE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE EMERGENCY (REFTEL). EMBOFF AND OTHER DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS HOTED THE RELATIVELY SPARSE TURNOUT FOR THE RED FORT CEREMONIES. VIRTUALLY NONE OF THE SEATS IN THE PARLIMANTARY RESERVED SECTION WERE FILLED, NUMEROUS SEATS IN THE "SPECIALLY INVITED GUESTS" WERE EMPTY. AND NUMBER OF SENIOR DIPLOMATS WER ABSENT. IN ADDITION, THE GENERAL PUBLIC WAS LANGUID IN ITS RESPONSE BOTH IN TERMS OF NUMBER AND ENTHUSIASM. AN EMBOFF WHO ATTENDED REMARKED THE WHOLE ATMOSPHERE WAS "COOL" AND THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR TOLD HIS DCM THAT HE WAS "ASTONISHED" AT THE LACK OF RECACTION TO THE PM. OUR GENERAL IMPRESSION IS THAT WHILE THIS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ALL THAT DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 11982 161421Z

INDIPENDENCE DAY OCCASIONS, WHICH OFTEN GIVE A LACK-LUSTER IMPREIMAGE AND TIGHTER FOR MRS GANDHI'S APPEARANCES BEFORE "THE MASSES". ON THIS OCCASION, THE PUBLIC WAS HELD BACK OVER 500 METRES, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES,AND POLICE WERE EVERYWHERE. END CONNFIDENTIAL
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